

## **Women Training in the Port Sector: New Opportunities**

For the last few decades, the focus of the port sector has been mainly on technological advances that makes productivity less dependent on human effort, knowledge and skills. But recent years have witnessed a growing acknowledgement by the Port Industry toward performance improvement through people. Ports should be seen as socio-technical systems because, in practice operations in Port terminals are carried out by a partnership between human beings and technology. This partnership can only be successful if appropriate emphasis is given to Human Resource Management and in particular the training component of H RM, an often overlooked area that can have a significant impact on port performance.

The task of finding port personnel who either possess or have the potential skills and attitudes that will enable a port business to carry out the tasks necessary for the achievement of its aims and objectives is of fundamental importance. Although the selection of port personnel is usually designed to recruit the most competent individuals, they are unlikely to remain competent for the whole of their career. As changes take place in technology, infrastructure, procedures, competition, interface with other mode of transport, knowledge and innovation, so to will the demands placed upon specific jobs in the port industry. Such changes will lead to the creation of jobs and discipline, which are new to the traditional Port Industry. This is where training comes in and there is no intrinsic reason (s) why women should not benefit in or participate in employment within the port sector.

Traditionally, the port sector or the Shipping Industry as it is often being referred to as being regarded as an exclusively male preserved workplace and only approximately three percent of the global women workforces are involved in this sector. Of this 3.0% -2.5% comes from the developed countries and the other .5% from the Developing countries.

Studies have indicated that most of the positions held by women on board ships are catering and administrative.

In the Caribbean 85% of the women who are employed in the port sectors holds non-managerial positions The other 15% are at the decision making level within the organization. It should also be noted that those at managerial level are mainly administrative and financial rather than technical and operational.

Examples of Managerial positions held by women in the Caribbean are:

- I) Financial Auditors
- II) Financial Comptrollers
- III) Human Resource Officers
- IV) Training and Development Manager
- V) Marketing officer
- VI) Occupational Health & Safety

At the Grenada Ports Authority there are Fifteen (15) women employed, this represents Twenty Three (23%) of its workforce.

Of the Fifteen persons employed Three (3) are at the Managerial level- (Accountant, Assitant to the Accountant and Personnel Officer).

Ten (10) in the Clerical department.

One (1) in the Operational Department as a Tally Clerk.

One (1) Attached to Marine Department as a Trainee Pilot.

Notwithstanding the progress made and the increase participation of women in the port sector, women do face a number of barriers in gaining access to employment.

### **BARRIERS**

- I) Male Domain- The well entrenched and rigid attitude which labels the port sector as a male domain.
- II) Lack of Female Role Models- There is a lack of female role model that other females in the region can use.
- III) Resources- Funding to pursue studies in the various fields.
- IV) The need to promote gender equality and empower women the same way as men.

Despite the above mentioned barriers, women see themselves as efficient and effective as men in the port sector.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

1. Pilots- At the Grenada Ports there is one trainee Pilots employ
2. Machine Operators- Operations of Forklift and Crane operator, Trailers
3. Marine Biology
4. Marine Pollution Prevention Control Officer- deals with cleanup fuel and oil spill clean up
5. Maritime radio and Electronic
6. Cargo Operation and Cargo Supervisor
7. Mechanical Engineers

8. Environmentalist
9. Marine Surveyors
10. Maritime Law
11. With the growing use of computers in the port sector there is a growing opportunity for women to become IT Specialist.
12. The list can go on but greater emphasis now being place on Customer Service at Seaport and the need for quality service there is a need for Customer Service Manager who can ensure the services deliver at Port of a high standard.

In concluding should be noted that with increase emphasis on performance improvement in the port sector through training there are a number of opportunities for women.

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